

ANAGRAMS

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some things are naturally so profound that not without difficulty can the most exceptional keenness in intellect sound their depths; like the sun's globe, by which, before they can clearly discern it, strong eyes are sometimes repelled. On the other hand, some things, though naturally clear perhaps, are so veiled by the artist's skill that scarcely anyone could by mental effort derive sense from them: as the immense body of the sun when hidden in clouds cannot be exactly located by the eye of the most learned astronomer. That some of the prophetic poems are in this class, I do not deny.—Boccaccio¹

This paper explores the use of anagrams and acrostics in *Paradise Lost* and the *Faerie Queene*. It is my intention to show how both John Milton and Edmund Spenser incorporated them as sublime embellishments to their epic poetry. Anagrams and acrostics are not the usual terms that come to mind when discussing these poems, but I hope to show that their presence in the texts represents an important and fundamental compositional technique that was employed and manipulated by both authors.

The use of acrostics as a method of poetic composition has a long history, perhaps almost as old as the history of writing itself. For example, as Plato points out in the *Phaedrus*, the Egyptian god Thoth, who was credited as being the inventor of writing, was believed to be the father of anagrammatical and acrostic writing as well. Acrostic poetic formulas can also be found in the Bible. Psalms (such as xxv and xxxiv), Lamentations i.-iv., and the first third of the book of the minor prophet Nahum are a few examples. In his work *On the Forms of Hebrew Poetry*, George Gray both investigates the use of acrostics in the Bible and provides diagrams to show how they function.² These biblical acrostics are relatively simple; the initial lines of the poetry follow the sequence of the Hebrew alphabet. In addition to demonstrating the biblical use of acrostics, Gray also points out that the practice was revived as a method of Hebrew poetic composition in the

¹ John Geraghty

ninth to tenth century CE. by Jewish poets such as Jose ibn Jose and Kaliri.³

Acrostic composition was also revered in the early Christian church. Saint Augustine included the most famous of these in his *City of God*:

- I Judgment shall moisten the earth with the sweat of its standard
H Ever enduring, behold the King shall come through the ages,
Σ Sent to be here in the flesh, and Judge at the last of the world.
O O God, the believing and the faithless alike shall behold Thee
Υ (Γ) Uplifted with saints, when at last the ages are ended.
Σ Seated before Him are souls in the flesh for His judgment.
- X Hid in thick vapours, the while desolate lieth the earth.
P Rejected by men are the idols and long hidden treasures;
? E Earth is consumed by fire, and it searcheth the ocean and heaven;
I Issuing forth, it destroyeth the terrible portals of hell.
Σ Saints in their body and soul freedom and light shall inherit;
T Those who are guilty shall burn in fire and brimstone for ever.
O Occult actions revealing, each one shall publish his secrets;
Σ Secrets of every man's heart God shall reveal in the light.
- Θ Then shall be weeping and wailing, yea, and gnashing of teeth;
E Eclipsed is the sun, and silenced the stars in their chorus.
O Over and gone is the splendor of moonlight, melted the heaven.
Σ (Γ) Uplifted by Him are the valleys, and cast down the mountains.
- Υ (Γ) Utterly gone among men are distinctions of lofty and lowly.
I Into the plains rush the hills, the skies and oceans are mingled.
O Oh, what an end of all things! earth broken in pieces shall perish;
Σ Swelling together at once shall the waters and flames flow in rivers.

Σ Sounding the archangel's trumpet shall peal down from heaven,
 Ω Over the wicked who groan in their guilt and their manifold sorrows.
 T Trembling, the earth shall be opened, revealing chaos and hell.
 H Every king before God shall stand in that day to be judged.
 P Rivers of fire and Brimstone shall fall from the heavens.⁴

The poem Augustine quotes is from a collection of prophecies used by the early church fathers, including Lactantius and Eusebius, known as the *Sibylline Oracles*. The *Sibylline Oracles* can also be found in the *Dies Irae*, beside David, as testimony to the final judgment. Although obviously of Judeo-Christian origin, they were considered genuine pagan prophecies concerning the birth of Christ. The prophecy proclaims the birth of a savior and when read in descending order using the original Greek in which it was written the initial letters of each line in the five stanzas spell "Iesous Christos Theou Uios Soter". Taking this a step further, the fathers also pointed out that the first letter of the first line of each stanza created the acronym "IchThUS". This was perceived as an important discovery because fish have been used as a mystical symbol for Christ since the beginnings of Christianity. The acronym derived from this acrostic was incorporated into a symbolic representation of a fish Ichthys and remains a popular international emblem of Christianity to this day.

Acrostics also maintained a favored status among Jewish mystics. For instance, the consonants of the word paradise were developed into an acronym by the Jewish mystic, Kabbalist, and author of the main sections of the *Zohar*, Moses de Leon (c.1240-1305 CE.). In a lost work written around 1290 entitled *Pardes* (which means paradise), Leon uses the word to signify the four levels of religious understanding in the Torah: the P stands for peshat, which is the literal

meaning; the R represents remez, which is the allegorical facet; the D refers to derasha, which is both the Talmudic and Aggadic interpretations; finally, the S if for Sod, which is the mystical manifestation.⁵

The use of anagrams has a long history as well. The word anagram comes originally from a Greek word meaning to write up, write back, or anew. The Latin form "annagramma" came into use in the 16th century. Hebrew tradition holds that there are secret messages woven into many segments of the Old Testament (mostly in the forms of anagrams or decipherable through the use of numerological relationships). In an effort to grasp the difficult concept of a transcendent Deity, early Jewish mystics developed a complex emanation theory in which the Hebrew alphabet played an important and fundamental role. Since Hebrew was the language that God chose to reveal Himself, and since acrostic composition was a vehicle through which biblical poets transcribed His revealed truths to mankind, it was logical to assume that such a compositional technique was an aspect of divine language.⁶

The most adamant adherents of this belief were the Kabbalists. Although Kabbalists claimed to derive their authority from an oral tradition handed down through initiates beginning with Moses himself, most scholars believe that this movement began in the twelfth century CE.⁷ According to Kabbalistic teachings, the inspired word of God that Moses transcribed into the Pentateuch is not in the order that God had dictated it to him. Instead, Moses scrambled the divine message into an elaborately structured code, the cipher for which he passed on orally to a select group of initiates who then passed this information

secretly through succeeding generations. This was done in order to protect the sacred mysteries of God from getting into the hands of the profane. Those who learned to decipher the text would be able to unscramble hidden messages from the Old Testament, reach deeper levels of spiritual understanding, speak with angels and demons, and perform magic.

The great Italian Renaissance scholar and humanist Pico Della Mirandola (1463-1494) is credited as the "Father" of Christian Kabbalah.⁸ After being exposed to the teachings of the Kabbalists, Pico became convinced that the major doctrines of Christianity were contained in their writings. In 1486 he publicly posted his *Conclusiones nongentae in omni genere scientiarum* in Rome. This work addressed such diverse topics as metaphysics, logic, philosophy, ethics, theology, and the Kabbalah. It was his intention to hold a debate in order to defend his beliefs on these issues. The debate was prohibited by Pope Innocent VIII after the papacy found thirteen of his conclusions to be heretical. One of the thirteen was Pico's statement that, "There is no knowledge which makes us more certain of the divinity of Christ than magic and Kabbalah". Fearing for his safety, Pico fled to France to avoid persecution. He was later to be cleared of the charges by Alexander VI. Pico then returned to Florence and was brought back into the folds of orthodox Catholicism by the infamous Girolamo Savonarola. The goal of Pico's work, especially in the fields of Hebrew and Kabbalah, was an attempt to harmonize the beliefs of Greek philosophy, Judaism, and Christianity. Unfortunately for Pico, his untimely death by poisoning prevented him from accomplishing this ambition.

Pico introduced the great German humanist scholar Johann Reuchlin (1455-1522) to Kabbalah in 1490 while Reuchlin was on a diplomatic mission to Italy. Inspired by Pico's passion for Kabbalah, Reuchlin renewed his study of Hebrew and is credited with publishing, among numerous other works, the first Hebrew grammar written by a Christian, *Rudimenta Linguae Hebraicae* (1518), as well as two books on Kabbalah: *De Verbo Mirifico* (1494) and *De Arte Cabbalistica* (1517). The wonder word of his first book on Kabbalah refers to the Pentagrammaton YHSWH which is the Hebrew word for Jesus, as opposed to the Tetragrammaton YHWH which is, of course, the Hebrew word for God. It is due in large part to the efforts of Reuchlin at legitimizing the practice that the new form known as Christian Kabbalah spread widely throughout Europe. Like their Jewish counterparts, Christian Kabbalists believed that after learning Hebrew it was possible to unscramble hidden messages from the Old Testament, speak with angels, and perform magic. The crucial difference in the eyes of the Kabbalists between their occult powers and those using other methods was that their magic was safer and less susceptible to the influences of demons because it derived ultimately from God. Since it claimed to derive its origins in scripture, Kabbalism was considered a way to gain supernatural powers without endangering one's mortal soul. Kabbalists were protected from malignant spirits because they used the Hebrew alphabet in their spells and incantations.

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While I am in no way trying to imply that Milton and Spenser were Kabbalists, based on my efforts of researching an origin or explanation for the presence of anagrams and acrostics in the *Faerie Queene* and *Paradise Lost*, I feel that Kabbalistic influence, whether

direct or indirect, offers the most plausible explanation. The use of anagrams, acrostics, and other types of subliminal semiotic encoding has always been controversial. Arguing for their existence in a text, or any other artistic medium for that matter, has always proven controversial as well. The esoteric quality of scriptures and art was an accepted and cherished aspect of Renaissance intellectual life (at least to those who considered themselves to be of the initiated). However, the syncretic and eclectic qualities of Renaissance iconography offers no easy path in deciphering their ultimate meaning. One only has to consider that for centuries great minds have studied *Paradise Lost* and the *Faerie Queene*, yet it is only recently that the acrostic elements of their poetic composition are being revealed.

Although predominantly religious and mystical, acrostics can also be found in secular poetry and drama. The Latin playwright Plautus includes them in the arguments of several of his plays. The following examples are from *Menaechmi* and *Cistellaria*:

Mercator Siculus, quoi erant gemini filii,
Ei surrupto altero mors optigit.
Nomen surrupti illi indit qui domist
A uos paternus: facit Menaechmum e Sosicle.
Et is germanum, postquam adoleuit, quaeritat
Circum omnis oras. post Epidamnum deuenit:
Hic fuerat alitus ille surrepticius.
Menaechmum omnes ciuem credunt aduenam
Eumque appellant meretrix, uxor et socer.
I[i] se cognoscunt frates postremo inuicem.

Comprimit adulscens Lemnius Sicyoniam.
Is redit in patriam et gnatam generat nuptiis
Sicyonia aeque parit puellam. hanc seruolus

T ollit atque exponit et ex insidiis aucupat.
 E am sublatam meretrix alii detulit.
 L emno post rediens ducit quam compresserat
 L emnique natam [de]spondet adolescentulo
 A more capto illius proiecticiae.
 R equirens seruos re[p]perit quam proiecerat:
 I taque lege et rite ciuem cognitam
 A lces[s]imarchus, ut erat nactus, possidet.

Later, writers in the English Renaissance also manipulated
 acrostics in secular contexts. For instance, Ben Jonson (1573?-1637),
 most likely following the example of Plautus, employed them in the
 arguments to *Volpone* (1606) and *The Alchemist* (1610):

V olpone, childless, rich, feigns sick, despairs,
 O ffers his state to hopes of several heirs,
 L ies languishing; his Parasite receives
 P resents of all, assures, deludes; then weaves
 O ther cross-plots, which ope themselves, are told.
 N ew tricks for safety are sought; they thrive; when bold,
 E ach tempts th' other again, and all are sold.

T he sickness hot, a master quit, for fear,
 H is house in town, and left one servant there.
 E ase him corrupted, and gave means to know
 A Cheater and his punk, who now brought low,
 L eaving their narrow practice, were become
 C oz'ners at large; and only wanting some
 H ouse to set up, with him they here contract,
 E ach for a share, and all begin to act.
 M uch company they draw, and much abuse,
 I n casting figures, telling fortunes, news,
 S elling of flies, flat bawdry, with the Stone;
 T ill it, and they, and all in fume are gone.

Jonson also wrote Epigramme XL (1616) in honor of Margaret
 Ratcliffe in the form of an acrostic:

M A R B L E, weepe, for thou dost cover
 A dead beautie under-neath thee,
 R ich, as nature could bequeath thee;
 G rant then, no rude hand remove her.
 A ll the gazers on the skies
 R ead not in faire heavens storie,
 E xpresser truth, or truer glorie,
 T hen they might in her bright eyes.

R are, as wonder, was her wit;
 A nd like *Nectar* ever flowing:
 T ill time, strong by her bestowing,
 C onquer'd hath both life and it.
 L ife, whose grief was out of fashion,
 I n these times. Few so have ru'de
 F ate, in a brother. To conclude,
 F or wit, feature, and true passion,
 E arth, thou hast not such another.

Acrostics were also used in the composition of Elizabethan court poetry. John Davie's *Hymns to Astraea* is the most famous of these. The initial letters of the poetry spell out the Queen's name. While I know of no precedent to link the *Faerie Queene* with acrostic compositional strategies, I think the examples I have found to be sufficient enough to warrant exploration.

One of the earliest examples in the poem occurs during the fight between Red Cross and Error. Red Cross has been caught up in the tail of Error and Una warns her champion, "Strangle her, else she sure will strangle thee!" (l.i.19). In the same stanza, Spenser tells us Red Cross has followed her advice saying, "Wherewith he grypt her gorge with so great paine. " The word gorge in this passage means throat and alludes, I believe, to the first acrostic in the poem:

T hus ill bestedd, and fearful more of shame,
 T hen of the certaine perill he stood in,
 H alfe furious unto his foe he came,
 R esolved in mind all suddenly to win,
 O r soone to lose, before he once would lin;
 A nd strooke at her with more then manly force,
 T hat from her body full of filthie sin
 H e raft her hatefull head without remorse;
 A streme of cole black bloud forth gushed from her corse.
 (I.i.24).

The acrostic THROAT acts as a gloss or reference to the action that is occurring in the scene. The poetic term for this type of word puzzle is logograph.

Another acrostic in the poem occurs while Fradubio is telling Red Cross how he was changed into a tree by Duessa because he saw her bathing in a stream. As in the first example, the acrostic BATH reflects the content of the passage:

B athing her selfe in origane and thyme:
 A filthy foule old woman I did vew,
 T hat ever to have toucht her, I did deadly rew.
 H er neather partes misshapen, monstrous,
 (I.ii.40-41).

Given the context of this acrostic, it is interesting to also note that the cure for the spell cast on Fradubio is also a bath:

"We may not change," quoth he, "this evil plight,
 Till we be bathed in a living well."
 (I.ii.43).

With the exception of THROAT, all of the possible acrostics are expressed as actual words in the text and in close proximity to where they occur. Another example of this is when Sansloy defeats Archimago and Una considers trying to escape from him:

Yet is she now in more perplexitie,
 Left in the hand of that same Paynim bold,
 From whom her booteth not at all to flie;
 (I.iv.40).

Unlike the other examples, this acrostic is written in reverse order and offers the alternative spelling of FLY to the form flies which is contained in the final line of the passage. Spenser varied the spellings of words liberally in the poem and fly is spelled f-l-y in the passage "And seek her spouse, that from her still does fly" (I.vi.22).

The outcome of the scene is delayed while Spenser goes on to relate the adventures of Red Cross in the House of Pride. When he returns to Una in Canto VI, the acrostic AWAY occurs:

W ho after Archimagoes fowle defeat,
 L ed her away into a forrest wild,
 A nd turning wrathful fire to lustful heat,
 W ith beastly sin thought her to have defilde,
 A nd made the vassall of his pleasures vilde.
 Y et first he cast by treatie, and by traynes,
 H er to perswade, that stubborne fort to yilde:
 F or greater conquest of hard love he gaynes,
 T hat works it to his will, then he that it constrains.
 (I.vi.3).

Here, AWAY is written as an acrostic immediately following the line in which Spenser informs us that Una is being led away. Only two stanzas later, the acrostic SAW occurs:

So when he saw his flatt'ring arts to fayle,
 And subtile engines bet from batteree,
 With greedy force he gan the fort assayle,
 (I.vi.5).

There is also an anagram in Canto vi. The word BATTLE can be

unscrambled as Satyrane and Sansloy are battling one another:

B T herewith they gan, both furious and fell,
A T o thunder blowes, and fiersly to assaile
T E ach other bent his enemy to quell,
T T hat with their force they perst both plate and maile,
T A nd made with furrowes in their fleshs fraile,
L T hat it would pittie any living eie.
E L arge floods of blood adowne their sides did raile:
B ut floods of blood could not them satisfie:
B oth hungred after death: both chose to win, or die.
(I.vi.43)

*Compare to Milton's
WAR in B&I PL*

A battle scene would be a relevant place to put an anagram since it would reflect the chaotic nature of combat. As in the acrostic examples, there is a line in close proximity to the passage that contains the actual word:

So long they fight, and fell revenge persue,
That fainting each, themselves to breathen let,
And oft refreshed battell oft renewe:
(I.vi.43).

Another anagram occurs in Book One when Una (allegorically representing the whore of Babylon) is riding upon the beast of Revelations and doing battle against Prince Arthur:

B T he proud Duessa full of wrathful spight,
E A nd fierce disdain, to be affronted so,
A E nforst her purple beast, with all her might
S T hat stop out of the way to ouerverthroe,
T S corning the let of so vnequal foe:
B ut nathemore would that courageous swayne
T o her yeeld passage, gainst his Lord to goe,
B ut with outrageous strokes did him restraine,
A nd with his bodie bard the way atwixt them twaine.
(I.viii.13).

As in the acrostic examples, the actual word is contained in the poetic

lines. The Apocalypse of John is full of numerological subtleties and other sublime elements. Perhaps Spenser was trying to convey the deeper streams of allegorical nuances in John's text by weaving this anagram into the scene.

Another type of anagram Spenser uses does not restrict itself to the initial lines of the text. Instead, some of the letters weave their way into the lines. The acrostic WRATH represents one of these instances:

W hen raging passion with fierce tyrannie
R obs reason of her due regalitie,
A nd makes it seruant to her basest part:
Th e strong it weakens with infirmitie,
(II.i.57).

In this passage, WRATH acts as a gloss, or logograph, to the poetic contents of the line. In other words, raging passion equals:

W
R
A
Th.

Later in Book II, Spenser again employs the acrostic WRATH, but this time he does it in reverse order:

H His brother Morgan, prickt with proud disdaine,
T To haue a pere in part of soueraintie,
A And kindling coles of cruell enmitie,
R Raisd warre, and him in battell overthrew:
W Whence as he to those woodie hils did flie,
(II.x.33).

If any of the anagrams or acrostics can reveal the motive or authority behind their employment in the poem, it would most likely be

the mirroring in the dual manifestations of the acrostic TAST:

N ow when their wearie limbs with kindly rest
A nd bodies were refresht with due repast,
F aire Vna gan Fidelia faire request,
T o have her Knight into her schoolehouse plaste
T hat of her heauenly learning he might taste,
A nd heare the wisdom of her words diuine.
S he graunted, and that knight so much agraste,
T hat she him taught celestiall discipline,
A nd opened his dull eyes, that light mote in them shine.

A nd that her sacred Booke, with bloud ywrit,
T hat none could read, except she did them teach,
S he vnto him disclosed euery whit,
A nd heuenly documents thereout did preach,
T hat weaker wit of man could neuer reach,
O f God, of grace, of iustice, of free will,
T hat wonder was to heare her goodly speech:
F or she was able, with her words to kill,
A nd raise again to life the hart, that she did thrill.

(I.x.18-19).

Here, like the Kabbalists, Spenser is implying that there is a secret way to read scriptures, and he has chosen to frame this passage concerning sacred knowledge with acrostics. The power Fidelia possesses to both kill and resurrect through her secret gnosis is reminiscent of Kabbalistic practices as well. Knowledge derived from TAST refers back to the eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil by Adam and Eve. God prevented them from eating from the second forbidden tree, the tree of life. The tasting of this second tree, which would have given similar powers to those bestowed upon Fidelia, is most likely what Spenser is referring to in this anagram.

While there are many more of these types of anagrams and

acrostics in the *Faerie Queene*, Milton's use of anagrams and acrostics in *Paradise Lost* seems more elaborate and complex. The examples I have chosen are intended as a representative sampling and are only a fraction of those contained in the poem. I have also compiled an assortment of passages where the acrostic word is contained in other places in the text, in other works by Milton, or in works which might have been available to Milton during his lifetime. A few of these passages not referenced directly will be placed at the end of the paper. It is not my intention to prove whether Milton was consciously aware of these passages when writing the acrostics. I only mention them so as to give a more complete picture as to how the words were applied by Milton and other Renaissance writers.

P.J. Klemp was the first to point out an acrostic in *Paradise Lost*.⁹ His article in the *Milton Quarterly* describes the acrostic SATAN as Satan is moving his way toward Eve in the form of serpent:

S cipio, the highth of Rome. With tract oblique
A t first, as one who sought access, but feared
T o interrupt, sidelong he works his way.
A s when a ship by skillful steersman wrought
N igh river's mouth of foreland, where the wind
(IX.510-14).

Here, not only do the first letters of each line of poetry spell SATAN in descending order, the passage is also describing Satan. In this excerpt, Satan has disguised himself as a serpent and is making his way toward Eve. Perhaps this is what Milton meant in the argument of Book I when he talks about, "the Serpent, or rather Satan in the Serpent" since the acrostic SATAN is spelled out while Satan is in the form of a serpent. Eve may not recognize Satan, but the acrostic exposes his true identity. Klemp's article only discusses this single acrostic. Apparently, Klemp

was only able to discern this one example from the text.

The next scholar to take on the challenge of uncovering possible acrostics in the text was Mark Vaughn.¹⁰ He, like Klemp, also published his results in the *Milton Quarterly*. He examines several possible acrostics and I have included his article, as well as all the other articles that have been published on the subject, in an appendix at the end of this paper. For the purposes of this essay, I will focus on three of his examples. The first two I would like to discuss are described by Vaughn as "coincidental with no relation to meaning." They are TOAD (VI.222-225) and DOG (VI.847-49).

In the first example, I would argue against Vaughn and point out that TOAD does have an important meaning in *Paradise Lost*. The careful reader would remember that Satan appears as a toad when he whispers into the ear of Eve in his first attempt at tempting her. While the acrostic does not occur in this scene, the two instances in which it does occur are in passages relating to Satan:

T hese elements, and arm him with the force
O f all their regions: how much more of power
A rmy against army numberless to raise
D readful combustion warring and disturb
(VI.222-25).

This acrostic occurs during the description of the war in heaven. There is also an ascending acrostic which spells DAOT (TOAD) and describes Satan as he is conversing with Sin at the gates of hell:

"D ear daughter, since thou claim'st me for thy sire,
A nd my fair son here show'st me, the dear pledge
O f dalliance had with thee in heav'n, and joys
T hen sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change
(II.817-20).

Taken alone, it is possible to argue that these acrostics are merely coincidental. However, Klemp's discovery strengthens my position since he has shown how Milton used an acrostic to expose Satan's true identity. Given this context, TOAD is another such occasion. To further strengthen my argument, I have discovered an anagram that combines both acrostics in a single passage that describes Satan. In this passage, Michael is relating how Christ will triumph over Satan, Sin, and Death through His death and resurrection. Milton inserted a double anagram in these lines. The first anagram that can be unscrambled is SATAN, and Satan is the sixth word of line 430:

S hall bruise the head of Satan, crush his strength
D efeating Sin and Death, his two main arms,
A nd fix far deeper in his head their stings
T han temporal death shall bruise the Victor's heel,
O r theirs whom he redeems, a death like sleep,
A gentle wafting to immortal life.
N or after resurrection shall he stay
(XII.430-36).

S	S.....Satan...
A	.
T	A
A	T
N	.
	A
	N

It is also possible to unscramble the word TOAD from this passage as well:

T	D
O	.
A	T
D	O
	A
	.

As I stated earlier, when Satan appears at the ear of Eve, he disguises himself as a toad. This anagram is a reflection of that passage since the combination SDATOAN expresses that relationship. The word SATAN is literally entwined in the word TOAD.

Vaughn's descending acrostic DOG takes on an entirely different meaning when viewed in reverse like a Pauline mirror. It becomes the ascending acrostic GOD. It occurs during the war in heaven when Christ is glaring thunderbolts at the rebellious angels through his eyes:

D istinct alike with multitude of eyes,
O ne Spirit in them rul'd, and every eye
G lar'd lightning, and shot forth pernicious fire

The only other place this acrostic occurs is after the fall when the animals are glaring at Adam and Eve:

D evoured each other; nor stood much in awe
O f Man, but fled him, or with count'nance grim
G lar'd on him passing: these were from without

The possibility that these two examples are coincidental are extremely remote especially since Milton used Glar'd at the end of each acrostic. Combined, these acrostics offer both a forward and reverse interpretation of DOG. The first is its meaning as the Deity and the

second is as its meaning as an animal.

The final example used by Vaughn that I wish to discuss is STARS (III.552-56). Following Satan's progression into book III, he enters the newly formed universe. As he moves through the galaxy the word STARS is written in descending order and traces his descent toward earth:

S uch wonder seized though after heaven seen
T he spirit malign but much more envy seized,
A t sight of all this world beheld so fair
R ound he surveys, and well might, where he stood
S o high above the circling canopy
(3.552-56).

Only a few lines later, Stars is the first word in line 566 and adds an horizontal compliment to the previously expressed vertical orientation. Line 566 reads, "Stars distant, but nigh hand seemed other worlds." It serves as a poetic indicator for the reader to look up and see the vertical spelling of STARS which lies just a few inches above in the text. While Vaughn properly describes this as an acrostic, he does not go far enough in solving the logograph.

Vaughn overlooked the fact that Satan does not proceed directly to Eden after passing through the universe. Instead, he lands on the sun and scouts out the newly created territory. As Satan descends through the galaxy, the sun is the final star he passes on the way to earth. This is like the letter "S" as the final letter in the great galactic chain S-T-A-R-S which moves down the text and traces Satan's movement toward Eden. This leads into the next acrostic that builds off of line 566 and creates the Latin word SOL. The point in the text where the vertical

STARS is reflected in its horizontal alignment Stars, becomes the starting point from which to construct the acrostic SOL:

S tars distant but nigh hand seem'd other worlds
 O r other worlds they seem'd. or happy Iles
 L ike those Hesperian Gardens Fam'd of old
 (III.566-68).

After working off of line 566, and reconstructing SOL, only a few lines later (572) the third word is Sun and Milton has written the first letter as a capital S (although editors of the poem have ^eamended it with a lower case s). Like the horizontal Stars (566) complimenting the vertical STARS (552-56), the English word Sun (572) provides the same type of balanced parallelism to the Latin SOL (566-68). I have provided a diagram the following page so the relationships I have discussed in this passage can be more easily observed.

S
 T
 A
 R
 S [o high above the circling canopy]

S [tars distant but nigh hand seem'd other worlds]
 O
 L....[Hesperian Gardens Fam'd of old]

The golden Sun...

This elaborate encoding is similar to an earlier scene in book II when Satan is making his way through chaos. He becomes disoriented and lost. Eventually, he asks Chaos for directions. Milton manipulates both anagrams and acrostics as he describes the scene:

E	E ternal anarchie, amidst the noise
O	O f endless warrs, and by confusion stand,
F	F or hot, cold, moist, and dry, four Champions fierce
	S trive here for Maistrie, and to Battel bring
	T hir embryon Atoms; they around the flag
	O f each his faction, in thir several Clanns,
	L ight-armd or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift or slow,
S	S warm populous, unnumbered as the sands
O	O f Barca or Cyrene's torrid soil,
L	L evied to side with warring Winds, and poise
	T hir lighter wings. To whom these most adhere,
	H e rules a moment; Chaos Umpire sits,
	A nd by decision more imbroiles the fray
	B y which he Reigns : next him high arbiter
	C hance governs all, into this wilde Abyss,
	(II.896-905).

As one might expect, the place to find words spelled chaotically is in chaos. Here, Satan the LOST SOL or FOE is LOST in CHAOS. Notice how FOE(896-8) is spelled as an ascending acrostic in the first three lines of the passage. SOL, as used by Milton in the earlier example with different connotations, is spelled in descending order in lines 903-5. It is also possible to recover two anagrams for LOST in lines 899-906. Finally, and arguably more problematic is the reconstruction of the anagram CHAOS (which is the fifth word in line 907) by combining the initial letters of 910 (C), 907(H), 908(A) , 904 (O), and 903 (S) respectively.

There is another example of FOE being used as an ascending acrostic in *Paradise Lost*. The passage is from the scene of the war in heaven. It relates Abdiel's speech against Satan in an act of bold confrontation in the hostile camp of rebellious angels. Acting as logogriph to the acrostic is Milton's description of Abdiel as being "Encompass'd round with foes!" (873):

E ncompass'd round with foes, thus answered bold.
O alienate from God, O spirit accurst,
F orsak'n of all good; I see thy fall
(V.873-75).

This adds a graphic illustration to the text because Abdiel is literally surrounded by "foes" (FOE and foes) as can be readily seen in the next diagram.

E.....foes

O

F

Also, by incorporating the acrostic with the linear first word of line 875, it is possible to call Satan the Forsak'n FOE.

One explanation for the use of acrostics and anagrams in following Satan's progression from hell, through chaos, and finally into our universe may be that Milton was attempting to provide a structural link beyond the written words of the text. Perhaps it was one way Milton was trying to express his belief in the "golden chain" (II.1005 and 1051) which links all other realms of God's creation to heaven. In my opinion, Milton may have been trying to express a spatial relationship of the worlds he was describing which would lie beyond the immediately perceptible written word and yet at the same time still be contained in the pages of the text. By using acrostics and anagrams,

Milton has been able to achieve a frame which both encapsulates the poetic content and complements its movement through the narrative.

The final scholar to have published an article on acrostics on *Paradise Lost* is C.W.R.D. Moseley.¹¹ He mistakenly thought he was the first person to describe acrostics in the poem. Although not entirely original, he does offer two more examples of acrostics in the text. They are THOTH (I.36-40) and ADAM (II.302-305).

As I explained at the beginning of the paper, Thoth, or Hermes Trismegistus, was an important figure in Hermetic philosophy as well as being considered the inventor of the type of compositional strategy I have been describing. Moseley correctly identifies Thoth in this way as well as being the "patron of the sort of speculative thought devils engage in — 'Vain wisdom all, and false Philosophie'(II.565)." Thoth may be the first acrostic in the text, but Moseley may have missed a more subtle part of the logograph:

T he Mother of Mankinde, what time his Pride
H ad cast him out from Heav'n, with all his Host
O f Rebel Angels, by whose aid aspiring
T o set himself in Glory above his Peers!
H e trusted to have equal'd the most High,

Not only is THOTH spelled when describing Satan, there is further Satanic back masking in the secondary acrostic for which is apparent in the following diagram:

T....
H....
O f....
T o....
H e.....

As the previous examples of FOE demonstrate, Milton was fond of subliminally weaving the word into passages where Satan is present.

Moseley's discovery of ADAM occurs in the text during another passage describing Satan:

A Pillar of State; deep on his Front engraven
D eliberation sat and publick care;
A nd Princely counsel in his face yet shon,
M ajestick though in ruin: sage he stood

As Moseley correctly points out, this passage correctly identifies Satan as the first Adam.

Satan is not the only character in *Paradise Lost* to have his name spelled out in the form of an acrostic. The three authors of articles on acrostics in *Paradise Lost* did not realize they occur in reverse order as well. If Moseley had realized this, he would have found the next two examples I wish to discuss and would have strengthened his argument immeasurably. They are the two ascending acrostics that spell MADA (ADAM). The first example is from Book IX. Book IX relates the fall of mankind. In this first ADAM passage, Satan is describing how God made man to replace the fallen angels. This occurs during his soliloquy just before he finds the sleeping serpent and enters its body.

M ore angels to create, if they at least
A re his created, or to spite us more,
D etermin'd to advance into our room
A Creature form'd of Earth, and him endow,
(IX.146-49).

In the second ADAM passage it is Adam himself rather than

Satan who is speaking about God's creation of mankind and Milton has once again spelled Adam as an ascending acrostic.

M ankind? This mischief had not then befall'n,
A nd more that shall befall, innumerable
D isturbances on earth through female snares,
A nd strait conjunction with this sex: for either
(X.895-98).

Like Satan, he is reacting to the actions of the creator with bitter hostility. In this scene he is talking directly to Eve (as opposed to Satan who was talking to himself). Adam is telling Eve that he wished she had never been created.

An important question in Milton's use of acrostics to name characters is why one never occurs that spells EVE. It would seem likely that in a poem of over 10,000 lines a name made up of only three letters would be spelled out somewhere in the text. However, I have found no such occurrence. The next example builds off of the two previous ADAM passages and shows another level of compositional complexity and explains how Milton represented Eve.

OAWMADA

O f his adorers: hee to be aveng'd
A nd to repair his numbers thus impair'd,
W hether such virtue spent of old now faild
M ore Angels to Create...
A re his Created..
D etermin'd to advance...
A Creature form'd of Earth...
(IX.142-49).

OWOMADA

O f nature, and not fill the world at once
W ith men as angels without feminine,
O r find some other way to generate
M ankind? This mischief had not then befall'n,
A nd more that shall befall, innumerable
D isturbances on earth through through female snares,
A nd strait conjunction with this sex: for either
(X.893-99).

Satan and the rest of the angels are not locked into the form of a specific gender. They can assume the form of either sex. The second example shows how Milton entwines Adam's lament about Woman into the acrostic ADAM through a simple rearrangement of the O, A, and W lines of Satan's speech (IX.142-49) to an O, W, and O arrangement in Adam's (X.893-95).

If you take the final line of Adam's lament "And strait conjunction with this sex..." as a literal clue to look for deeper meaning in the acrostic, then you can untangle "Woman" twice from the word ADAM. The two spellings read:

W		W
O	and	O
Man(894-6).		M
		An(894-97).

Here, Milton is expressing how closely Adam and Eve are linked to one another through his use of this acrostic. Even Adam's caustic remarks to Eve cannot alter the fact that they are made of the same flesh and blood. It is an example of highly subtle and sophisticated poetic irony and gives added resonance to the passage where Adam tells Eve:

So forcible within my heart I feel
The Bond of Nature draw me to my owne,
My own in thee, for what thou art is mine;
Our State cannot be severd, we are one,
One Flesh; to loose thee were to loose my self.
(IX.955-59).

The short articles by Klemp, Vaughn, and Moseley are testimony to the extremely abstract nature of Milton's craft. As the quote from Boccaccio at the beginning of the paper illustrates, there are many elements of prophetic poetry that we know little or nothing about. It often takes centuries to untangle the labyrinthine iconography of great poetic works and we often only see what we have been trained to look for. Given the fact that both Milton and Spenser employed these techniques, I feel it is highly probable that other works by them and others contain these elements as well. The rest of the paper explores other examples of this strategy in an attempt to provide a fuller appreciation of the technique.

The word FIAT is spelled down the column in the final three lines of Book VII (639-41). It completes the formation of the acrostic by linking up with the first line of book VIII. FIAT is one of the opening words of the Latin Vulgate. Milton's use of the line "From the beginning.." seems to echo the lines of the KJV (In the beginning..). Also, by separating the "In" prefix from the opening word "Informed" (640) and then substituting "In" for "From", it is possible to reconstruct these three words of the KJV or, simply, "In the beginning:"

From the beginning, that posterity
Informed by thee might know; if else thou seek'st
Aught, not surpassing human measure, say"
The angel ended, and in Adam's ear (VII.639-41, VII.1).

Book VII is an appropriate place for the acrostic FIAT, since it is the book in which Raphael relates the creation (Genesis) to Adam. The final line of FIAT ("The angel ended and in Adam's ear") marks both the end of the acrostic as well as the beginning of the eighth book. In the first edition of the poem, however, books VII and VIII were combined as Book VII. Milton changed a portion of the text in order to provide a smoother transition, but he did not break the integrity of the acrostic. The lines from the first edition read:

From the beginning, that posteritie
In formd by thee might know; if else thou seekst
A ught, not surpassing human measure, say.
To whom thus *Adam* gratefully repli'd
(VII.639-42).

In another passage, Satan and the other fallen angels, who have lost the original paradise (heaven), are in hell. Satan is lying on the burning lake and lamenting their fall. He is addressing Beelzebub who is Satan's second in command. Also, notice how the word LOST is spelled in descending order, as if to trace the path the fallen angels have taken in their plunge from heaven. This acts as a gloss to the title, *Paradise Lost*:

Let us not slip th' occasion, whether scorn,
Or satiate fury yield it from our foe.
Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
The seat of desolation, void of light,
(I.178-181).

My next example describes the fallen angels floating like
"many a rood" on the burning lake:

P rone on the flood, extended long and large
L ay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
A s whom the fables name of monstrous size,
T itanian, or Earth-born, that warred on Jove.
(I.195-98).

The note on rood in the *Norton Critical edition of Paradise Lost* defines rood as meaning a quarter of an acre. Plat arose early in the 16th century. A plat is a small parcel of land usually with an additional word alongside it to describe its character. In my opinion, if Milton had intended this as an acrostic, then rood (l.196) provides that additional meaning because it describes the dimensions of the angels.

Another definition of plat during Milton's lifetime was as a word describing a work of poetry. A quote from Puttenham reads: "Our maker or Poet is... first to devise his plat subject, then to fashione his poeme." (1589 Puttenham *Eng. Poesie III* xxv. (Arb.) 312). While I am not suggesting Milton had this reference in mind when constructing the acrostic, it is difficult not to read this passage and ignore the added association of plat to poetry. ? omit?

Milton, like Spenser, often writes acrostics backwards, or in what I would call ascending as opposed to descending order. My next example is another such occasion:

T hey heard and were abashed, and up they sprung
U pon the wing, as when men wont to watch
O n duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
R ouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
(I.331-34).

In this passage, the ROUTed angels " Rouse and bestir themselves..." after sleeping on the burning lake. There are several definitions of rout which give added meaning to this passage. Rout

means to rush about with great force or violence, it also means to throw, cast, or hurl, and yet another definition is a disreputable class of persons. Examples of all these definitions of rout can be found in Milton's writing.¹²

Book IV contains another example of Milton employing the acrostic ROUT:

T hat mountain as his garden mold high raised
U pon the rapid current, which through veins
O f porous earth with kindly thirst up drawn,
R ose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
(IV.226-29).

Here, Milton is using rout in the sense of moving with great force or violence. The passage explains how a mountain (whose high plateau is Eden itself) blocked the course of a mighty river and caused the river to rush through the mountain's porous core and rout its way up to Paradise. Also notice the similarity of the initial lines of the acrostic being Rouse and Rose. The difference is only a single letter.

God sends Raphael down to Eden in Book V. Adam asks him about the war in heaven, and Raphael begins to relate what had happened. The acrostic WAR is written in the text during Raphael's narration. Here, the key wording of "Rebellion rising"(V.715) acts as a logogriph to see the word WAR rising up the page:

R ebellion rising, saw in whom, how spread
A mong the sons of morn, what multitudes
W ere banded to oppose his high decree;
(V.715-17).

WAR is spelled again as Raphael concludes his story to Adam about the war in heaven. This is the point in the battle at which God opens up the walls of heaven in preparation to hurl Satan and the rest of the rebel angels down into hell. At this point the war is no longer rising and is instead literally falling from the pages of the poem as the devils will soon be hurled from heaven:

W ith terrors and with furies to the bounds
A nd Chrystall wall of Heav'n , which op'ning wide,
R owld inward, and a spacious Gap disclos'd
(VI.859-61).

Also, WAR is descending down the text as if to trace the descent of the fallen angels and their falling hopes of victory.

In addition, there are two anagrams for war in *Paradise Lost*. The first alludes to the war in heaven:

W A gainst the throne.....
A Rais'd impious War in heaven....
R With vain attempt
(I.41-43).

Notice how Milton, as in the previous Sun example, capitalized War. Also notice the logogriph Rais'd that alludes to the ascending acrostic in Book V. There is another line in the text that alludes to the ascending acrostic WAR: "A growing burden. Mean while Warr arose" (II.766). Finally, there is another anagram for war that provides a similar function:

W Reflecting blaze on blaze.....
 A Warr he perceived....
 R Already known....

(VI.16-20).

Book II begins with a debate among the fallen angels over what to do next. Satan, sitting on his newly created throne in pandemonium, initiates a debate with the rest of the devils concerning their desperate situation. The first to speak is Moloch. He argues to renew the battle against God since there can be no punishment worse than hell. The second devil to speak in the debate is Belial. He argues that they should wait and see what God will do next rather than try to take any direct action. The following acrostic occurs in Belial's speech:

V iews all things at one view? he from heav'ns highth
 A ll these our motions vain, sees and derides;
 N ot more Almighty to resist our might
 T hen wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.
 S hall we then live thus vile, the race of Heav'n
 (II.190-94).

The word vant is a variation of vaunt.¹³ A Vaunt is a boastful speech. Milton used this definition of vaunt earlier in the text when describing Satan's first words in hell. The passage reads, " So spake th' apostate angel, though in pain,/ Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair!" (I.125-26). Later it is used again in Book IV when Satan first comes down to earth and lands on mount Niphates. Speaking to himself during another moment of deep despair, Satan says:

None left but by submission, and that word
 Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
 Among the spirits beneath, whom I seduc'd

With other promises and other vaunts
 Then to submit, boasting I could subdue
 Th' Omnipotent. Ay me, they little know
 How dearly I abide that boast so vaine,
 (IV.80-86).

As Book II progresses and moves from the realm of hell to the realm of chaos, one acrostic assumes a dual patterning which I would describe as both mirroring and alteration. It is as if Milton intentionally reversed the next two acrostics BAIT/TIAB in an effort to heighten the eerie feeling of moving from a realm of order into a realm of complete disorder.

B ecome our Elements, these piercing Fires
 A s soft as now severe, our temper chang'd
 I nto their temper; which must needs remove
 T he sensible of pain. All things invite
 (II.275-78).

This passage is from Mammon's speech. He argues that the devils accept their imprisonment in hell and try to make the best of it rather than risk being totally destroyed by God. He is baiting his audience. In *Samson Agonistes*, there is a passage which uses "bait" in this rhetorical sense of the word. There the chorus warns Sampson, "Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear/ The bait of honied words..." (1065-66).

This next passage describes the torments of hell and how Medusa foils the attempts of the dead to drink from the river Lethe:

T he tempting stream, with one small drop to lose
 I n sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,
 A ll in one moment, and so neer the brink;
 B ut fate withstands, and to oppose th' attempt
 (II.607-10).

The enchanted waters would allow the souls to forget the world of the living and make hell more endurable. Compare this acrostic to the passage from Book X which reads, "Their penance laden with fair Fruit, like that/ Which grew in Paradise, the bait of Eve/ Us'd by the Tempter: on that prospect strange" (X.549-51). As the waters of the river Lethe represented a "tempting"(II.607) bait for souls entering the underworld, the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was turned into "...the bait of Eve"(X.550) by the great "Tempter"(X.551) Satan.

Another interesting parallel in these two BAIT passages from Book II is the way in which "temper" (II. 276,77) is metamorphosed to "tempting" (II.607) and then "attempt" (II.610). By putting them side by side, Milton's phrase "our temper chang'd" takes on a literal sense with the multiple alterations of the word.

Here, in deliberate disobedience to the instructions of God, Sin is taking the key to the gates of hell and releasing Satan from his captivity. Up until this point, the gates of hell had been shut FAST. Shortly, however, Death Unfast'ns (II.879) them and they open very FAST indeed:

T hus saying, from her side the fatal Key,
S ad instrument of all our woe, she took;
A nd towards the Gate rouling her bestial train,
F orthwith the huge Portcullis high up drew,
(II.871-74).

In book VII, Raphael relates to Adam how he and the other loyal angels had checked the gates of hell shortly after the war in heaven

telling him, "...Fast we found, fast shut/ The dismal Gates, and
barricado'd strong;" (VII 238-39). Also, there is an earlier reference to
"fast" in book II describing Sin that reads, "Had not the Snakie
Sorceress that sat/ Fast by Hell Gate, and kept the fatal key" (II.723-
24). Therefore, Milton links both the gate and the gate-keeper
Sin with his use of the acrostic FAST.

Spenser also incorporated the acrostic FAST into the *Faerie
Queene*:

T hey let her goe at will, and wander ways vnknowne.
S he flying fast from heauens hated face,
A nd from the world that her discouered wide,
F led to the wastfull wilderness apace,
(I.viii.49-50).

This passage is referring to Duessa and it is interesting to note that both
Duessa in the *Faerie Queene* and Sin in *Paradise Lost* represent a
mythical female Demon, perhaps Lillith, who was present before the
creation of the world. It seems more than a coincidence that Milton
would choose to tag his female demon with the same acrostic that
Spenser used. In my opinion, it may be Milton's allusion to the fact that
he was aware of Spenser's use of acrostics and, like Spenser, he chose
not to reveal their existence in the text.

I would describe the next passages as being extremely subtle
acrostics. The relationship of context to content is considerably
extended. They express relatedness through the words fowl and fish.

From the Suns Axle; they with labour push'd
O blique the Centric Globe: Som say the Sun
Was bid turn Reines from th' Equinoctial Rode
Like distant breadth to Taurus with the Seav'n
(X.670-73).

Beast now with Beast gan war, and Fowle with Fowle,
And Fish with Fish; to graze the herb all leaving
(X.710-11).

For angers sake, finite to infinite
In punisht man, to satisfie his rigour
Satisfi'd never; that were to extend
His Sentence beyond dust and Natures Law
(X.802-05).

Lines 670-73 speculate on how the universe was changed after the fall.

Lines 710-11 describe how the once docile animals began to turn against one another as a result of the reorientation of the universe.

Lines 802-05 contain part of the speech in which Adam speculates that if he kills himself his spirit may suffer eternal punishment. Whether these passages contain some type of linkage or relationship beyond the words fowl and fish I do not know. I mention them in order to bring up the question of whether or not there may be a deeper and more elaborate aspect of composition in *Paradise Lost* that requires further investigation.

My favorite example in the text is the dual acrostic FALL. It occurs in Book IX while Adam and Eve are discussing the possibility that they may fall:

From his surmise prov'd false, finde peace within,
 Favour from Heav'n, our witness from th' event.
 And what is Faith, Love, Vertue unassaid
 Alone, without exterior help sustaind?
 Let us not then suspect our happie State
 Left so imperfet by the Maker wise,
 As not secure to single or combin'd.
 Fraile is our happiness, if this be so,
 (IX.333-340).

This acrostic is foreshadowing the fall in Book X. The construction is close to a perfect alphabetic example of a Neoplatonic emanation theory. If you divide the ascending and descending acrostics into two classes, the ascending acrostic represents man's movement upward toward God and the descending acrostic represents heavens influence upon mankind. For example, the following diagram should explain what I mean:

Deity	
E	
S	
C	
E	
N	
D	
I	
N	
Gulf created by the fall	
N	
I	
D	
N	
E	
C	
S	
Adam	

Therefore, the reason fall is spelled FF-AA-LL as it descends down the page is to represent that this will be the second fall from heaven's perspective (Satan and his legions being the first). However, from mankind's perspective, which moves from the ground (material world) upward towards heaven (spiritual realm) it will be the first fall and so Milton spells the ascending acrostic with single letters. The double l's that both acrostics share represent the spiritual linking of mankind with the One.

The final item I wish to discuss in this paper is either a very strange coincidence or a further insight into the complexity of the poem's construction. As I was reading the first two lines of the poem from a facsimile of the first edition I realized they both began with "Of" and contained the exact same number of letters. I also noticed that Oreb (l.7) is misspelled and should in fact be written as Horeb. Horeb is derived from the Semitic root hrb which refers to dryness. All the references to Horeb as Mount Sinai in the KJV are spelled with the initial "H".¹⁴ The word Oreb, on the other hand, is a proper name and always refers to a Midianite prince or the rock upon which he was slain.¹⁵ With Milton's extensive knowledge of Hebrew (including pointing), such a mistake would have been readily apparent if unintentional, especially since it occurs in only the first few lines of poetry. After noticing this I then took the first six lines of the poem and wrote them on a piece of graph paper in a vertical arrangement. Without skipping lines for word breaks, I came up with the following diagram:

O F M a n s F i r s t D i s o b ...
 O f t h a t F o r b i d d e n t r e e ...
 B r o u g (h) t ...
 W i t h l o ...
 R e s t o r ...
 S i n g H e ...
 O f O r e b o r o ...
 T h a t S h e p h ...
 I n t h e b e g

(I.1-9).

I found it quite interesting that the correct spelling (although uncapitalized) horeb aligns vertically with the horizontally misspelled Oreb. The capitalized Horeb can be restored by beginning at the initial H from Heav'nly(I.6), building off the "o" and "r" in Restore(I.5) and then proceeding straight down from line 5 and joining the e from Heav'nly(I.6) and the b from Oreb(I.7) which makes almost a perfect circle. Horeb can also be spelled at least two additional times in this example by weaving underneath line seven. All this may be just a coincidence, but it must be admitted that it is a rather striking one. However, if this is not a coincidence then a further analysis of the text may reveal deeper insights into Milton's compositional techniques. With some of the relationships I have found in the text, I do not feel such an investigation would be unwarranted.

These anagrams and acrostics in *Paradise Lost* and the *Faerie Queene* represent a mystical level of truth which transcends the written words of the poetic lines. The devils in hell may make illustrious speeches but they are exposed as VANTS and BAITing. Satan may feel a false sense of freedom in moving from hell to Eden, but his

movements are forced to trace God's carefully laid PLAT. Satan can disguise himself as a serpent and fool Eve but his falsehood is exposed in such acrostics as SATAN and TOAD. Adam may direct misogynist comments to Eve and wish she were never created, but Milton's structuring of the discourse clearly emphasizes the deep bonds and intimate solidarity between men and women.

In conclusion, it is my hope that the observations I have made in this paper add an additional interpretive dimension to the scenes in which anagrams and acrostics are contained. It is my belief that they symbolize a mystical or divine aspect of language. Language, or logos, did not change after the fall. It was mankind's understanding and manipulation of language which became altered. Reality and its mediation through the word was obscured and changed after Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Manacled in the bonds of materiality, material desire subsumed the spiritual or transcendental dimensions of language. The eating of the fruit veiled the "...ways of God to men"(I.26). The challenge of the human spirit is to transcend the baser materiality of language through mystical associations as the anagrams and acrostics demonstrate in the texts.

Notes

- ¹Giovanni Boccaccio, Boccaccio on Poetry, ed. Charles G. Osgood. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956) 59.
- ²George B. Gray, The Forms of Hebrew Poetry. (1915; KTAV, 1972) 250-51.
- ³Ibid. 8.
- ⁴Saint Augustine, City of God from Basic Writings of Saint Augustine (New York: Random House, 1948) 426-27).
- ⁵See Gershom G. Scholem, On The Kabbalah and its Symbolism. (New York: Schocken Books Inc., 1965) 57.
- ⁶See Lloyd Jones' introduction to De Arte Cabbalistica (New York: Abaris Books, 1983) 21.
- ⁷Joseph Dan, ed. and Ronald C. Kiener trans. , The Early Kabbalah (New York: Paulist Press, 1986) 1.
- ⁸See The discovery of Hebrew in Tudor England: a third language (London: Butler and Tanner Ltd., 1983) 23. Lloyd Jones has done an excellent job in tracing the history of the development of both the study of Hebrew and Christian Kabbalah from the Italian Renaissance to its later introduction into Tudor England and I highly recommend reading this work.
- ⁹See appendix E.
- ¹⁰Ibid.
- ¹¹Ibid.
- ¹²See appendix B.
- ¹³See appendix C.
- ¹⁴See Exodus 3:1, 17:6, 33:6; Deuteronomy 1:2, 1:6, 1:19, 4:10, 4:15, 5:2, 9:8, 18:16, 29:1; Kings 1:8:9, 1:19:8; Chronicles 2:5:10; Psalms 106:19; and Malachi 4:4.
- ¹⁵See Judges 7:25, 8:3; Psalms 83:11; and Isaiah 10:26.

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3. Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth and the
blood of his sons, saith the LORD; and I will requite thee
in this plat, saith the LORD. Now therefore take [and] cast
him into the plat [of ground], according to the word of the
LORD. (KJV, Kings 2: 9-26).

4. Her hair, nor loose nor tied in formal plat
Proclaimed in her a careless hand of pride;
(Shakespeare, *Lucrece Complaint*, 30-31).

5. Our maker or Poet is...first to devise his plat subject,
then to fashion his poems. (1589 Puttenham Eng. Poetrie III
xxv. (Arb.) 312).

Appendix A

Plat

1. This Flourie Plat, the sweet recess of Eve

Thus earlie, thus alone; her Heav'nly forme (P.L. IX.455-56).

2. Oft on a Plat of rising ground,

I hear the far-off Curfeu sound (*Il Penseroso* 73-74).

3. Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboath and the

blood of his sons, saith the LORD and I will requite thee
in this plat, saith the LORD. Now therefore take [and] cast
him into the plat [of ground], according to the word of the
LORD. (KJV. Kings 2: 9:26).

4. Her hair, nor loose nor tied in formal plat

Proclaimed in her a careless hand of pride;
(Shakespeare. *Lovers Complaint*. 30-31).

5. Our maker or Poet is...first to devise his plat subject,

then to fashione his poeme. (1589 Puttenham Eng. Poesie III
xxv. (Arb.) 312).

Appendix B

Rout

1. Erring for he with his rebellious rout

Fell long before; nor aught avail'd him now (P.L. I.746-7).

2. Cleer Victory, to our part loss and rout

Through all the Empyrean: down they fell (P.L. II.770-71).

3. I saw and heard, for such a numerous host

Fled not in silence through the frightened deep

With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout (P.L. II. 991-93).

4. Comus enters with a Charming Rod in one hand, his Glass in the other, with him a rout of Monsters...

(*Comus*, stage direction after line 113).

5. The Muse her self, for her enchanting son

Whom Universal nature did lament,

When by the rout that made the hideous roar

His goary visage down the stream was sent (*Lycidas*, 61-64).

6. For if we be sure we are in the right...if we ourselves

condemn not our own weak and frivolous teaching, and the

people for an untaught and irreligious gadding rout...

(*Aeropagitica*, paragraph 101).

Appendix C

Vant

1. CAESAR: Go charge Agrippa

Plant those that have revolted in the Vant,

That Antony may seem to spend his fury

Upon himself.

(Shakespeare. *Antoni and Cleopatra* IV.6).

2. They thinke no man so able to achiue any enterprises as he,vanting of his victories.

(Greene. *Morando Wks.* (Grossart) 1584-7).

3. For Southward, men are cruell, moody, madd, Hot blacke, leane, leapers, lustful, vsd to vant

(J. Davies (Heref.) *Microcosmos Wks.* (Grosart) I,31/1. 1603).

Appendix D

Fast

1. Had not the Snake Sorceress that sat
Fast by Hell Gate, and kept the fatal key (P.L. II.723-4).
2. Or as a Thief bent to unhoord the cash
Of some rich Burgher, whose substantial dores,
Cross-barred and bolted fast, fear no assault (P.L. IV.189-91).
3. Hitherwards bent (who could have thought?) escapst
The bars of Hell, on errand bad no doubt:
Such where ye find, seize fast, and hither bring
(P.L. IV.790-2).
4. Our prompt obedience. Fast we found, fast shut
The dismal Gates, and barricado'd strong; (P.L. VIII.238-9).